

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJ: RECREATIONAL BOATING - LENINGRAD

1. THIS YEAR, FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW, THE CONSULATE GENERAL'S SAILBOAT HAS BEEN LAUNCHED AND IS AVAILABLE FOR USE BY STAFF MEMBERS. THIS IS FINE AND THERE SEEM TO BE NO PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SAILBOAT, ASIDE FROM FACT THAT IT IS MOORED MILES FROM LENINGRAD AND CAN ONLY BE USED IN A RESTRICTED AREA ON THE NORTH SHORE OF THE GULF OF FINLAND (AS BEFORE). THE BOAT ITSELF IS REGISTERED AND LICENSED BY THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES, BUT NO ONE HAS EVER TOLD US THAT LICENSES ARE REQUIRED FOR THE PEOPLE WHO OPERATE IT.

2. ABOUT A YEAR AGO THE NCOIC OF THE MARINE SECURITY GUARD RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE MSG ACQUIRING A SMALL MOTOR BOAT. SINCE THE PROPOSED BOAT (14-FOOT ALUMINUM) AND MOTOR (9.6 HORSEPOWER) FELL WELL WITHIN THE MAXIMUM THE SOVIETS HAVE INDICATED THEY WOULD ACCEPT, I APPROVED THIS TRANSACTION. THE MARINE BOAT AND MOTOR ARE NOW ON POST. WE HAVE REGISTERED AND LICENSED THE BOAT, BUT WE HAVE NOT YET PUT IT IN THE WATER BECAUSE THE SOVIETS INSIST THAT IT CAN ONLY BE OPERATED BY LICENSED SMALL-BOAT OPERATORS WHO HAVE PASSED APPROPRIATE

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SOVIET EXAMINATIONS.

3. PRESUMABLY, THE DIFFERENT SOVIET APPROACH TO LICENSING OPERATORS OF THE SAILBOAT AND THE MOTORBOAT IS BECAUSE THE LATTER IS 100 PERCENT UNDER POWER, EVEN THOUGH THE FORMER IS A MUCH LARGER VESSEL. IN ANY CASE, WE ARE FACED WITH WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE MOTORBOAT AND ITS

POTENTIAL DRIVERS. ONE THING IS SURE: IF WE TRANSLATE THE SOVIET MARITIME RULES OF THE ROAD INTO ENGLISH, THE MARINES STUDY THEM, PASS A SOVIET EXAMINATION, AND ARE EVENTUALLY ISSUED LICENSES, THE SUMMER WILL BE LONG-GONE AND THERE WILL BE NO MARINE MOTORBOATING IN LENINGRAD THIS YEAR.

4. WE PROPOSE TO KEEP THE MOTORBOAT AT THE DACHA, FIFTY-FOUR KILOMETERS FROM LENINGRAD. THERE ARE NO MORE THAN A HALF DOZEN OTHER POWER BOATS WITHIN MANY MILES. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE WHOLE PROBLEM FOR THIS YEAR IS SIMPLY TO LET THE MARINES USE THEIR BOAT. IF ANY SOVIET AUTHORITIES EVER QUERY THIS SITUATION(WHICH I DOUBT ANY EVER WOULD), WE COULD SIMPLY TAKE UP THE ARGUMENT FROM THERE.

5. IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW HOW AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES SOVIETS WHO OPERATE SOVIET EMBASSY BOATS AT POINT COMFORT ARE REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED, IF AT ALL. IF THEY ARE NOT REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED OR SIMPLY DO NOT GET LICENSES, IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL FOR US TO KNOW THIS IN PLAYING OUR OWN SITUATION HERE.NEUBERT

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